

Introduction

Tao Te Ching is the most profound theological text I have ever encountered. It contains both metaphysical and ethical teachings of an ancient Chinese wiseman called Laozi (romanized: Lao Tzu). Just as mysterious as his text, it is believed that this person lived around 6th century B.C.E.

Alongside Zhuangzi, written few hundred years later, it is considered to be foundational cornerstone of the Taoism (Daoism) - one of three Chinese philosophy and religion stems together with Confucianism and Buddhism.

Famous psychologist dr. Jung wrote foreword and commentary for the book "Secret of the Golden Flower", Richard Wilhelm`s translation of the Chinese book of Life, another sinitic esotericism, making an excellent reference for those who wish to research Chinese mysticism more thoroughly. Long time orally transmitted it was first printed in 18th century.

Preceding all mentioned comes I Ching or The Book of Changes, hexagram divination method, dating back from thousand to several hundred years B.C.E.

Tao Te Ching literally translated means "Book of Way and Virtue". I am using dr. Wu`s English translation, free available on-line, because Croatian translation I own, in a form of soft, pocket edition isn`t precise enough.

Verses

Work contains 81 verse. I will cite or comment most interesting ones and share some of my thoughts although entire text deserves proper attention from a reader since it abounds in life wisdom.

1

How can you name that which is eternal and infinite?

What can we humans know about an ultimate instance?

Our knowledge is limited.

2

Contrasts give birth to each other. Without ugly there is no beautiful. Without tall there is no short. Without evil there is no good.

Wiseman doesn't quit after succeeding. Because he doesn't quit he is always ahead of things.

Wiseman uses effortless effort (Wu Wei). He doesn't take away or accumulate beyond measure and he doesn't argue.

Tao seems to be an origin of all things.

What is an origin of Tao, if it has any, remains unknown.

Tao can affect and change reality.

It can untie any knot and blunt sharp edges.

No amount of words can fathom it:
Better look for it within you.

8

Water can support things and penetrate through obstacles.

11

We produce things from different materials but only an empty space
inbetween makes them useful (glass, cup, wheel, room).

This explains intergalactic void.

Only he who is willing to give his body for the sake of the world is fit to be entrusted with the world. Only he who can do it with love is worthy of being the steward of the world.

This has been written several hundred years before Jesus Christ. He could have read it and, influenced by the same, sacrificed himself.

1, 4, 14, 21, 25 and 32

Laozi uses these attributes to describe the Tao: nameless, fathomless, an origin of all things, exist forever, formless, soundless, incorporeal, indefinable, unimaginable, evasive, elusive, silent, boundless, alone without change.

Why is it without change?

Because as its creator it is unaffected by Time.

Correspondingly, I describe Tao as: intangible, inconceivable, eternal and infinite.

How do I know the ways of all things at the Beginning?

By what is within me.

Similar can be found in verse 5:

No amount of words can fathom it:

Better look for it within you.

I believe that we humans are walking proofs of creation. a) Our eyes reflect the Big Bang: black center depicts dark age, colourful surroundings portray the Universe. b) our lungs (breathing, inhale/exhale) mimic the cosmic expansion and compression. c) sleeping (dreaming) is an intermediate phase between prior two, sort of renewal preparation. d) human brain neurosynaptic structure resembles galactic distribution. e) human growth looks just like that of the Universe. When people are younger they develop much faster when later in life people tend to expand.

Every living being share same properties to that of the Creation because process is going downstream, not evolving but deducting. From higher to less. Children receive qualities of their parents. That is why Laozi say "How do I know the Tao? By what is within me."

We are not enhanced (evolved). We are lower in the celestial hierarchy. What is at the summit? Tao.

We belong to the last category. We are ruled by those whom we despise and defy.

25

I do not know its name;

I style it "Tao".

And, in the absence of a better word, I call it "The Great".

Similar to verse 1.

29

This verse speaks about "middle" approach. Always avoid extremes.

30

What is against Tao will soon cease to be.

If you swim against the stream you will soon get exhausted.

28 and 32

And to return again to Primal Simplicity.

When Primal Simplicity diversifies...

Small as it is in its Primal Simplicity...

When once the Primal Simplicity diversified.

How is it possible that 2.500 years before modern scientific discoveries, in cosmology and particle physics, Laozi talks about singularity and diversification?

33

Self-control is very hard to achieve.

40

All things under heaven are born of the corporeal:
The corporeal is born of the Incorporeal.

41

When a worthless scholar hears the Tao,
He laughs boisterously at it.
But if such a one does not laugh at it,
The Tao would not be the Tao!

42

Tao gave birth to One,
One gave birth to Two,
Two gave birth to Three,
Three gave birth to all the myriad things.

Is it possible that Laozi refers to singularity (One), matter and anti-matter (Two) and proton, neutron and electron (Three) which then created the known Universe? If true, it is incredible insight indeed.

43

Only Nothing can enter into no-space.

45

The greatest perfection seems imperfect,
And yet its use is inexhaustible.

50

It is said that he who knows well how to live meets

no tigers or wild buffaloes on his road, and comes out
from the battle-ground untouched by the weapons of
war.

52

All-under-Heaven have a common Beginning.

Again, alluding to the singularity?

64

A journey of a thousand leagues starts from where your feet stand.

70

The fewer persons know me
The nobler are they that follow me.

75

Why are the people starving?
Because those above them are taxing them too heavily.
That is why they are starving.

In Croatia, to declare personal bankruptcy you have to pay.

That is why we here are starving.

76

Hard and rigid belongs to a company of dead...

The mighty and great will be laid low,
The humble and weak will be exalted.

77

Who except a man of the Tao can put his superabundant riches to the service of the world?

Sincere words are not sweet,
Sweet words are not sincere.

tao_memo.jpg (1085×506) (jwwb.nl)